



NEWS

From County Supervisor Paul Biane

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Mobile Command Centers to Aid in Disaster Responses

SAN BERNARDINO - Two 37-foot-long Mobile Command Centers complete with comprehensive emergency communications systems, weather-monitoring stations, 72-hour generators, and other useful tools will allow the San Bernardino County Fire Department to better coordinate responses to disasters.

County officials toured one of the recently acquired Mobile Command Centers during a press conference after the Board of Supervisors meeting on Oct. 26.

Second District Supervisor Paul Biane said he recognized Mobile Command Centers were needed after he saw County Fire Division Chief Pat Dennen using his personal motor home as a command center during the Grand Prix and Old Fires in 2003.

"Resourceful firefighters made it work, but it took too long to set up the communications system and turn Chief Dennen's motor home into a functioning command center," Supervisor Biane said.

Biane recommended County funding for the Mobile Command Centers, which cost about \$200,000 fully equipped, during mid-year budget adjustments in 2004.

"When disaster strikes, our fire commanders must be entirely focused on responding to the crisis and ensuring people's safety," Supervisor Biane said. "These Mobile Command Centers will enable them to do just that."

The Mobile Command Centers can be set up quickly and will enable fire officials to map out response plans indoors, communicate with firefighters on the frontlines, and monitor emergency situations, all from central, strategic locations. One Mobile Command Center will be stationed in the San Bernardino Valley while the other will be housed in the High Desert. This will allow firefighters in both regions to quickly establish command posts during emergencies such as wildfires, floods and earthquakes.

The San Bernardino County firefighters utilized one of the Mobile Command Centers during the Thurman Fire that erupted east of Redlands in late September and scorched nearly 1,000 acres.